

William Colombot Hart, 96

William Hart died on July 3 after a long and fulfilling life. In the last week of his life, he was surrounded by his three devoted children, Deborah Hart (Vineyard Haven), Henry Hart (wife Anne; Chestertown, Md.), and Brad Hart (wife Susan; Greenwich, Conn.). Bill was predeceased by his loving wife of 65 years, Katharine Downey Hart. He also is survived by his three granddaughters, Margaret Hart Marks, Julia Hart Clark, Caroline Downey Hart, and his three beautiful great-grandsons, Christopher McCallum (Mac) and Henry Whitlock (Whit) Marks and Calvin Hart Clark.

Bill had many accomplishments in the course of his 96 years. His friends and family will remember him for his strong commitment to his wife, his children and their families; his oldest friends; his curiosity and love of learning and, possibly above all, his beloved dogs. Bill found great joy in the companionship of his dogs and was never more content than when he was walking one of the many canines that were his devoted companions throughout his life.

Bill was born April 23, 1921, in Andover, Mass., to Anita and Henry Hart. His father was the chauffeur to the headmaster of Phillips Academy, which afforded Bill the opportunity to attend this fine academic institution, which fueled his intellectual curiosity and began his lifelong love of learning. Bill went on to Amherst College where he starred as a football player, leading Amherst's undefeated team in 1943. While at Amherst, he met Katharine, who was a student at Smith College (Class of 1944). Bill and Katharine were married in Scarsdale, N. Y., on May 5, 1945. After two years in Charlottesville, Va., where he earned a law degree at The University of Virginia, Bill and Katharine spent several happy years in Mamaroneck and Pleasantville, N.Y., before moving to Bethesda, Md. in 1960, where they raised their family.

Bill's extraordinary life included service as a navigator on a B-24 in World War II. His plane was shot down over Romania in December 1944. Missing in action and presumed dead for almost three months, the entire crew managed to survive and escape to London after receiving much needed assistance from a Canadian missionary, Serbian partisans and the Russian army. At the war's end, Bill returned to the U.S., married Katharine, attended law school, started a family and embarked on a career that included work as an attorney in New York City (1948-1960), the head of Columbia Gas System's government affairs office in Washington, D.C. (1960-1984) and, finally, as a college professor at American University and Stonehill College.

In 1985, Bill and Katharine moved to Duxbury. In this beautiful town, they spent their last 26 years together, sharing the "little beach" with their children and grandchildren, renewing old friendships and making many great new friends while becoming part of a close knit community. Bill taught a government relations course at Stonehill College, often with his beloved Labrador Retriever in tow, which Bill acknowledged increased the popularity of his courses. He played regular weekly games of golf and bridge and walked all over Duxbury and the surrounding area with his dogs.

The Hart family would like to thank the many friends who have shown a lifetime of support for Bill, especially over the past few years when he needed them most. And, a special thank you to the caregivers, led by Mary Ann Dailey, who showed such kindness to Bill after Katharine's passing in 2010. A memorial service will be held Aug. 12, 2017, at 2 p.m. at the Duxbury Senior Center. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that you consider a donation to Alzheimers Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave. Floor 17, Chicago, Ill., 60601 in Bill's memory.